

Message Text

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PAGE 01 NEW DE 08588 020759Z
ACTION NEA-11

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FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1951
INFO AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU
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LIMITED OFFICIAL USE NEW DELHI 8588

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: MASS, IN, NP
SUBJECT: EAST-WEST HIGHWAY

1. BEFORE DEPARTING FOR U.S. IN CONNECTION WITH PRIME MINISTER
DESAI'S FORTHCOMING VISIT, AMBASSADOR GOHEEN PREPARED THE FOLLOWING
MESSAGE IN CONCERT WITH AMBASSADOR HECK IN KATHMANDU.

2. IF IT IS AT ALL POSSIBLE, AMBASSADOR HECK AND I WANT TO SEE
OUR SPARE PARTS SUPPORT FOR THE EAST-WEST HIGHWAY CONTINUE UNTIL
JUNE 1981, BY WHICH TIME WORK ON THE HIGHWAY SEGMENT UNDER CON-
STRUCTION SHOULD BE COMPLETED. THE PROJECT IS A GOOD EXAMPLE OF
INDO-NEPALESE COOPERATION, IMPORTANT IN OPENING UP COMMUNI-
CATIONS TO ISOLATED AREAS OF NEPAL. TERMINATION OF OUR SUPPORT
IS LIKELY TO DELAY THE COMPLETION OF CONSTRUCTION AND WILL BE
DIFFICULT TO EXPLAIN TO THE INDIANS. AS TARAPUR HAS SHOWN, THE
INDIANS ARE HIGHLY SENSITIVE TO ANY INDICATIONS THAT USG IS NOT
LIVING UP TO ITS CONTRACTUAL OBLIGATIONS. AS WE PREPARE TO ENTER
INTO NEW COMMITMENTS FOR BILATERAL ASSISTANCE, SHOULD WE BE RENEGING
ON OLD COMMITMENTS SUCH AS THE EAST-WEST HIGHWAY?

3. IN NEPAL, GOI WILL UNDERSTANDABLY PUT ONUS ON OUR SHOULDERS
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FOR ANY RESULTING DELAYS IN CURRENT PORTION OF EAST-WEST
HIGHWAY PROJECT WITH WHICH U.S. HAS BEEN ASSOCIATED SINCE IN-
CEPTION OF PROJECT IN LATE FIFTIES AND AS MEMBER OF REGIONAL
TRANSPORT ORGANIZATION IN EARLY SIXTIES. NEPALESE FOR THEIR PART
WILL MOST CERTAINLY BE UNHAPPY OVER ANY SUCH UNANTICIPATED POST-
PONEMENT IN COMPLETING THIS SECTION OF COUNTRY'S PRIME TRANS-
PORTATION LINK. BOTH WE AND NEPALESE ARE HEAVILY DEPENDENT ON

THIS LINK TO FACILITATE OUR CURRENT EFFORTS TO ADDRESS BASIC HUMAN NEEDS IN RURAL AREAS. FURTHER, GON LIKE GOI WILL FIND IT DIFFICULT TO UNDERSTAND INCONSISTENCY BETWEEN SUBSTANTIAL INCREASE IN OUR DEVELOPMENTAL ASSISTANCE TO NEPAL AND OUR BACKING AWAY FROM PROJECT AND COMMITMENT WHICH INVOLVES RELATIVELY SMALL AMOUNT OF MONEY WHEN MEASURED AGAINST THAT OVERALL AID PROGRAM.

4. CONSEQUENTLY, WE REQUEST THE DEPARTMENT TO ADVISE DOD THAT FOR POLITICAL REASONS DEPARTMENT WOULD LIKE TO SEE EAST-WEST HIGHWAY PROJECT THROUGH TO COMPLETION, AND TO ASK DOD TO TRY TO MAKE ADDITIONAL MONIES AVAILABLE BY RECOUPING UNUSED FUNDS FROM OTHER MAP ACCOUNTS. THE AMOUNT REQUESTED SHOULD BE AT LEAST DOLS 350,000, OR ABOUT DOLS 10,000 A MONTH, BUT EVEN A LESSER AMOUNT WOULD PERMIT A MORE DECENT AND ORDERLY TERMINATION OF OUR SUPPORT.

5. WHILE WE UNDERSTAND THAT INDIA IS NO LONGER ELIGIBLE FOR MAP FUNDS, SECTION 516 (PAGE 95) OF LEGISLATION ON FOREIGN RELATIONS THROUGH 1977, VOLUME I, DATED FEBRUARY 1978, WOULD APPEAR TO PROVIDE GRANDFATHER CLAUSE TO PERMIT USE OF OBLIGATIONS INCURRED BEFORE SEPTEMBER 1977 TO WIND UP MILITARY ASSISTANCE PROGRAMS UNTIL SEPTEMBER 30, 1980
BLOOD

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